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Meeting Summary Worker's Compensation Advisory Committee Subcommittee on Health Care May 7, 2003

Participants

Labor:	Jerri Wood (for Robby Stern), Owen Lynch, and Ed Wood
Business:	Clif Finch, Beverly Simmons, and Gerald Reilly
L&I:	Gary Franklin, Roy Plaeger-Brockway, Bob Mootz, Blake Maresh, Diana Drylie, Susan Campbell, Bob Mayer, and Josh Morse
UW:	Tom Wickizer, Deb Fulton-Kehoe, and Terri Smith-Weller
Renton COHE:	Pat Vincent, Karen Nilson, and Grace Casey
Spokane COHE:	Tom Fritz and Scott Graham
Guests:	Sallie Reuter, Industrial Rehab Assoc. of Wa.

Introductions – Gary Franklin

Delivery Team Reports – Western Washington (Renton) COHE team

Pat Vincent provided an update on the activities of the COHE since the last WCAC-HC meeting, as well as an overview of the challenges they have faced implementing the project. Challenges include the recruitment of competing occupational health clinics, small attendance at Continuing Medical Education seminars, and delays in getting the data management software working. Pat also mentioned that they do not feel they have the “man” power to enroll self-insured employers at this time; she cited the added complexity of unique FAX numbers, should SI employers enroll, and the efforts already undertaken to train providers to use one FAX number. Also self-insured employers have different processes of filing claims and bills. Enrolled providers are seeing self-insured claimants, however.

In terms of recruitment, Pat reported that they now have all five of the area's occupational health networks as part of the project. 108 APPs are now enrolled, with about 3300 claims received. The electronic information system came online in a limited capacity as of April 18th. Once fully operational, the system will not only function as a valuable data base for the COHE's Health Service Coordinators, but it will also serve pilot doctors who choose to use it to monitor and track any claims for which they are providing care.

The Western Washington COHE will host its next CME on psychological issues in the evening of June 4.

Delivery Team Reports – Eastern Washington (Spokane) COHE Team

Scott Graham, COHE Project Manager, and Tom Fritz, chief administrator of Inland Northwest Health Services, represented St. Luke's Rehabilitation Institute. Scott reported on the progress to date on each of the deliverables in the contract. They hosted a CME on April 26 at which 20 providers signed up for the program. Their occupational medicine information tracking system is almost finished and includes best practice algorithms. The five labor members of the Business

and Labor Advisory Board have been appointed; business is almost finished with their appointments. The other committees, including quality assurance and community outreach, also have business and labor representation.

The next CME in Spokane will be August 9 and will be on carpal tunnel syndrome and low back pain.

Research Team Report – UW team

Deb Fulton-Kehoe presented data on the number of APPs in the western Washington COHE and their performance on the quality indicators, including early receipt of the ROA, completion of activity prescription forms, and calls to employers.

There are currently 108 APPs participating in the pilot. The data indicate that the APPs are improving the median amount of time from date of treatment to L&I receipt of the ROA. Data show that even the high-volume APPs are sending their ROAs to L&I more rapidly. Of significant interest were numbers comparing the processing time of COHE claims to claims initiated prior to the pilot project. From the date of first medical treatment to the date L&I makes its initial allowance decision, the COHE claims showed approximately a one week average decrease in processing time compared to the year prior to project implementation. The UW researchers have not compared the L&I processing time to a control group of non-COHE claims. It could be that the COHE claims have had a decrease in the time to claim receipt and that all claims have had a decrease in the time it takes L&I to make the initial decision.

Approximately half of the high-volume APPs have been completing activity prescriptions and calling employers. Low-volume APPs have a much lower completion rate for these activities. These data cover the time period of June-December 2002 and are expected to increase as APPs become more familiar with the requirements of the project.

Tom Wickizer next spoke to the committee and laid out the method and measures the UW will use to do the formal pilot project evaluation. Providers participating in the project will be compared to non-participating providers within the pilot area. The evaluation will assess disability status (measured by time-loss), patient satisfaction, costs (both medical and time-loss), and provider satisfaction. The outcome evaluation of the eastern Washington COHE will continue until June 2006.

Tom also reported on further analysis of the worker satisfaction survey data. The analysis shows that those workers who were less satisfied with their care were more than three times as likely to be on time-loss at 6 or 12 months than those workers more satisfied with their care. In addition, the analysis found that those workers less satisfied with how their claim was handled were almost three times more likely to retain an attorney. Workers who were less satisfied with the timeliness of their claim were about 2 times more likely to retain an attorney.

Next Meeting

September 11, 2003 - 1:00 – 4:00
Tukwila Service Location